

August 14, 2003

## **PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### **Solicitation of Applications for the VA Research Mentored-Minority Career Enhancement Award (MMCEA)**

#### **1. Purpose:**

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Research and Development (ORD) invites applications for the MMCEA Program. This Program is designed to increase the number of underrepresented clinician and non-clinician minority researchers in VA. This program is modeled after the current VA Career Development Program; however, this program seeks to recruit potential awardees at an earlier stage than the ORD Career Development Program (and is also offered to non-clinician doctoral researchers). This program is made available through partnerships between VA Health Care Facilities, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). These partnerships serve to foster mutually supportive relationships and to develop initiatives to increase educational opportunities at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). Eligible participants include individuals who have completed their clinical fellowship or PhD doctoral training within the last two years. VA investigators and research staff are encouraged to recruit outstanding candidates.

Applicants will be eligible to receive a structured, 3-year mentored-research training experience and full VA salary for the period of the award. The mentored-training should be tailored to produce participants who will be competitive for Research Career Development and Research Career Scientist Programs following conclusion of the award. Alternatively, these individuals may become fully independent researchers.

#### **2. Program Guidelines:**

Physicians or doctoral scientists who meet US citizenship regulations at the time of the application deadline are eligible for the program. Applicants must describe their plans to commit three consecutive years to research training and their academic careers.

An ORD multidisciplinary Mentored-Minority Review Panel (MMRP), composed of senior, nationally respected VA and non-VA professionals will review the applications. All applicants must identify a local **primary VA mentor** as well as a secondary VA or non-VA mentor.

#### **3. MMCEA Application Instructions (2 Components):**

##### **a. Applicant Component**

- 1) Three-page description of the applicant's career goals (research, clinical, and academic).
- 2) Description of the relationship to proposed mentors and plans for interaction with each mentor.
- 3) Description of planned research projects (ongoing and proposed).

- 4) Proposed didactic work (coursework and timeline).
- 5) Curriculum vitae of applicant.
- 6) Memo from VA Human Resources indicating that the applicant meets minimum requirements for appointment to VA.

b. Mentor Support Letter (required from each mentor)

- 1) A brief description of the percent distribution of the mentor's time in research, patient care, teaching and administration.
- 2) Description of the mentor's current obligations including number of residents, fellows and other trainees (as well as project trainees).
- 3) A detailed description of the mentoring plan, role of the applicant in the mentor's research program, percentage of the time to be devoted to the applicant, and type of interaction the applicant will have with other researchers at the VAMC.
- 4) Mentor's CVs.
- 5) Training plan outline (research project, coursework, data sessions, seminars, etc).
- 6) Mentor's resources available at the VAMC (space, lab, equipment, computer support, etc).
- 7) Director's letter stating that the Dean's Committee and R&D Committee have approved the submission. The Director's letter is expected to include any information pertinent to administrative matters.

#### 4. Review Criteria:

Applications will be reviewed using the following general criteria:

- a. Qualifications of the candidate including clarity of career goals, planned didactic training, qualifications of mentors, and research training plan.
- b. Each mentor's plans for training in relation to existing funded research.
- c. Evidence that the mentors have the appropriate experience and skills to ensure adequate mentorship.

#### 5. Submission deadlines:

**Letters of Intent (LOI)** and full application deadlines - LOIs are required to be submitted to VACO ORD 3 months prior to the full application submission deadline (See Table).

Submission Deadlines	
Calendar Year 2003	Calendar Year 2004 and Beyond
LOI: October 15, 2003 Application: January 15, 2004	2004 and beyond submission deadlines can be obtained by visiting ORD's website at <a href="http://www.va.gov/resdev">www.va.gov/resdev</a> or by contacting Terri Carlton at (202) 254-0265 or via email at <a href="mailto:terri.lynn.carlton@hq.med.va.gov">terri.lynn.carlton@hq.med.va.gov</a> .

The LOI includes the following information: a one-page abstract of the planned research; curriculum vitae (including name, address, and telephone number) of the applicant and the primary and secondary mentors; and documentation from local Human Resources Management (HRM) office of applicant's appointment eligibility. LOIs will allow ORD to plan for the full application review.

**6. Appointments:**

All appointments are on a temporary basis as time-limited appointments. Eligible clinicians may be appointed under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 7405 (a)(1). Title 38 appointments are determined locally, but may not exceed the level of Intermediate Grade Step 1 and are excluded from all elements of Physicians' and Dentists' Special Pay. Non-clinician PhD applicants may be appointed under Title 5 Code of federal regulations (CFR) 213.3227 (a) (Schedule B) at the General Schedule (GS) –11 level.

**7. Inquiries and Additional Information:**

Principal Investigators interested in participating in these programs are encouraged to visit the VA ORD website, <http://www.va.gov/resdev> or contact Terri Carlton, Minority Research Initiatives Program Manager, at 202-254-0265 or [terri Lynn.carlton@hq.med.va.gov](mailto:terri Lynn.carlton@hq.med.va.gov).